DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 221 444 SO 014 279

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TITLE Black Women and the Philosophy of "Race Uplift" Prior to Emancipation. Working Paper.
INSTITUTION Radcliffe Coll., Cambridge, MA. Mary Ingraham Bunting Inst.
SPONS AGENCY National Inst. of Education (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE 80
GRANT NIE-G-78-0236
NOTE 36p.; For a related document, see SO 014 280.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Black Attitudes; Black Education; Black Employment; Black History; *Black Leadership; Black Organizations; *Black Power; *Females; *Racial Discrimination; Racial Relations; *Slavery; United States History; Whites

ABSTRACT

The pre-emancipation (1830-1865) black woman reformer was concerned with race "uplift," a sense of duty and obligation to her race. Black women in the North formed mutual aid societies for the economic survival of the destitute. Regardless of economic status, free blacks consistently sought to aid slaves in the South; the poor often saved for years to purchase their relatives. Some black women, Harriet Tubman, for example, worked toward helping slaves escape to the North. While both white and black women formed charitable organizations, it is commonly agreed that black women organized for survival and self-improvement while white women's organizations were mainly self-serving. Even though the women's rights movement began at this time, black women were excluded from it. Education became a primary concern of race "uplift" as blacks sought to erase the myth of intellectual inferiority. Because whites were reluctant to teach blacks anything but rudimentary skills, black teachers for black students became an important issue. Black women worked both toward the establishment of formal schools and of educational organizations which provided for adult education. In fact, education became the major force in creating black nationalism. (Author/KC)

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BUNTING INSTITUTE WORKING PAPER

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BLACK WOMEN AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF "RACE UPLIFT" PRIOR TO EMANCIPATION

by

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SO 014 279

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INTRODUCTION

The efforts of Whites--male and female--in the abolitionist and anti-slavery movement have been well documented. And, while numerous studies and biographies provide some information concerning Black male involvement in the pre-Civil Ware era, with the exception of a brief mention of Harriet Tubman or Sojourner Truth, little is written of the Black woman's role in the attempts to improve the condition of her race during the period prior to Emancipation.[1] Yet, in the early decades of the nineteenth century, Blacks espoused a self-help philosophy known as race "uplift" or "elevation." The Black female was a significant force within this movement.

The central theme of the "uplift" philosophy was duty and obligation to race. Wilson Jeremiah Moses, in a critical assessment of nineteenth century and early twentieth century Blacks and their "uplift" ethos, views this philosophy as being synonymous with "racial chauvinism" and "black nationalism." He defines the period of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 to the imprisonment of Marcus Garvey, the Pan-Africanist, in 1925 as the "golden age of black nationalism" (hence, "golden age of race uplift"). Moses argues that Blacks of the "uplift" school of thought were merely seeking integration through separatist means. He further theorizes that since Blacks were barred from leadership positions within White society, "uplift" activities provided them with such positions within their own communities. Thus, with a messianic attitude, and by embracing European culture and values, "uplift" Blacks sought to "elevate" and "civilize" the lowly, uncultured Black masses.[2] The efforts were, of course, elitist, bourgeois, and condescending according to Moses, and his chapter on the role of Black women and "uplift" during the late nineteenth century concludes:

> Uplift is the key word, for the middle-class Afro-American woman, like her white counterpart, viewed the masses as victims of cultural and social retardation. She had little sense of fellowship or identity with the masses. Her attitude was often one of crusading, uplifting zeal. The masses were to be prepared for the responsibilities of citizenship; they were to be Anglo-Americanized, it was hoped; they would be assimilated into mainstream American life.[3]

For such a scorching indictment, Moses offers no documentation. However, if one explores the historical role of Black women within the "uplift" movement, a different conclusion from Moses' will likely be drawn. Rosalyn Terborg-Penn in an essay "Discrimination Against Afro-American Women in the Woman's Movement, 1830-1920," provides an understanding of the Black woman's struggles and involvement in seeking equality as a woman as well as a Black. Penn correctly observes, "to date, the role of the black female reformer during the antebellum period has not been examined thoroughly."[4]

Thus, this essay attempts to examine the role of the Black women in the numerous "uplift" activities prior to Emancipation. Throughout the nineteenth century, Blacks viewed themselves as a collective body. An achievement for one was perceived as by Blacks as an achievement for all--a race achievement. In the writings of the Black women discussed below, it is rare to find one who did not attribute the motivating force of her life activities to that of "duty" or "obligation" to her race.

This study also addresses the unique position that Black women were place being members of two oppressed groups--Black and female. The "cult of true womanhood" thrust of the early nineteenth century emphasizing women's purity, submissiveness and natural fragility was the antithesis of the reality of most Black women's lives. Furthermore, the institution of slavery, as well as the tentative employment of free Blacks in the North, gave Black men little control over the destiny of their women.

Finally, this essay focuses upon the great influence the "uplift" concept played in the Black community's philosophy of education. Blacks viewed education as one of the foremost vehicles for race "uplift" and it was seen as a great liberating force. In addition, education would serve to dispel the myth of the inferiority of the Black race.

Through the letters, speeches, organizational records, narratives, "reminiscences," abolitionist and Black newspapers of the antebellum period, an overview of the pre-Emancipation Black woman reformer is presented. While most were enslaved prior to 1865, some were free. Although most were impoverished throughout the century, a few prospered. Most had limited educational opportunities, although a minority became highly educated for the period. The common bond that they all shared was racial oppression.

ALL AS ONE

By Emancipation, nearly one half million free Blacks resided in the United States, being equally divided between the North and the South.[5] Despite their "freedom," most could only marginally be considered such. In his study of free Blacks in North Carolina, John Hope Franklin described his subjects as "quasi-free" while historian Ira Berlin termed free Blacks in the South as "slaves without masters." Likewise, the French nobleman Alexis de Tocqueville noted while touring the United States in 1831 that "the prejudice of race, appears to be stronger in the states that have abolished slavery than in those where servitude has never been known."[6]

Except for several New England States, free Blacks were barred from voting, testifying in court, carrying arms, traveling freely, pursuing certain occupations, and obtaining an equal education compared to that of Whites of the antebellum period. In addition, free blacks in the

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South were required to carry a certificate of freedom; without it they could be sold back into slavery. Also, Southern free Blacks were frequently restricted in their rights of assembly. Often a respectable White person was required to attend their gatherings.[7]

Thus, in a largely proscribed environment, free Blacks sought to survive economically. In the South, free Black men were normally employed as farmers, woodchoppers and ditchers in the rural areas and as factory workers, teamsters, common laborers, servants and skilled artisans in the cities. Those in the North were usually mariners, mechanics or day laborers.[8] However, employment for Black women was less diverse. In both North and South the primary occupation for the Black female was domestic service--particularly that of washwoman. A report of Black employment in the North at the beginning of the nineteenth century indicated that the women, "generally, both married and single, wash clothes for a livelihood"--a fact that would remain throughout the century.[9]

Although the race as a whole suffered economically, particularly acute was the financial condition of the free Black female. Greatly outnumbering Black men in both North and South, the single or widowed Black woman relied upon her small earning to support herself and often dependent children. This sexual imbalance of free Blacks in the South was compounded in urban areas where there was a larger number of slave women than men.[10]

Free Blacks in the North suffered greater job discrimination than their free kin in the South as a result of foreign immigration. As early as 1850 in New York City, there were more Irish servants than the total Black population.[11] And, as Northern Black men were replaced as servants, doormen, barbers, etc. by Europeans, the Black female frequently became the sole breadwinner. In their study of the Black wage earner, Carter G. Woodson and Lorenzo Greene noted the importance of the Black washwomen stating, "without a doubt many a Negro family would have been reduced to utter destitution had it not been for the labor of the mother as a washerwoman."[12]

In the first of many organized activities to help themselves, free Blacks in the late eighteenth century formed mutual and benevolent societies. The African Union Society of Newport, Rhode Island organized in 1780 by free Black men and women "to promote the welfare of the colored community. . .by helping apprentice Negroes, and by assisting members in the time of distress" signaled the beginning of Blacks in an organized fashion stressing duty and obligation to aid members of their race and concretely doing so. Similar societies such as the African Society of Boston and the Friendly Society of St. Thomas in Philadelphia also appeared in the 1790's with the focus of their charities being the widows and orphaned children in their communities.[13] The male African Society of Boston's laws expressly stated, "should any Member die, and leave a lawful widow and children, the Society shall consider themselves bound to relieve her necessities. . .and that the Society do the best in

their power to place the children so that they may in time be capable of getting an honest living."[14] Similar organizations were also prevalent in the South, although most functioned clandestinely.[15]

The intellectual inferiority of the Black race and the notion of its members as childlike and irresponsible was the widespread belief of Whites in the nation.[16] Thus, in addition to the need for Blacks to sustain themselves economically, the mutual and beneficial organizations demonstrated to society that Blacks could be responsible. Further, these groups stressed it was the obligation of Blacks to help one another. In a speech in New York in 1813, George Lawrence, a free Black man lectured other Blacks on their duty to each other as well as emphasizing to them that such efforts were a demonstration of their capabilities. Lawrence told his audience, "Be zealous and vigilant, be always on the alert to promote the welfare of your injured brethren."[17] He continued:

> It has been said by your enemies, that your minds were not calculated to receive a sufficient store of knowledge, to fit you for beneficial or social societies; but your incorporation drowned that assertion in contempt.[18]

As the number of Black women proliferated in the North, they began to form separate mutual aid societies. In Philadelphia alone, by 1827, two-thirds of the 10,600 Black residents of that city were female.[19] Organizations such as the Dorcas Society, the Sisterly Union, the United Daughters of Wilberforce or the African Female Union became the means by which many Black women received support during sickness or hard times. By normally paying 12½ cents a month or $1.00 quarterly, a society would provide assurance that a member would receive a decent burial or have their orphaned children provided for. By 1838, of the 7600 Black members of mutual aid groups in Philadelphia, two-thirds were female. They alone raised $13,000 for their economic survival in that year in Philadelphia.[20] Black men also continued their concern and support of their women and children. An 1831 advertisement in the Philadelphia Gazette addressed "To The Public" informed the readers of the many Black societies formed for their mutual benefit. The article stated that despite the many "privations" of people of color, they believed it their "duty" to lessen the weight of one another through organizational means. Proudly proclaiming the efforts of the Philadelphia Black community, the article stated:

> The funds are exclusively appropriated to the relief of such of its members, as through sickness or misfortune, may be unable to work; to the interments of deceased members, and to the relief of their widows and orphans, and Therefore, by contributing a trifling sum to these funds while in prosperity, we not only secure to ourselves a pension in sickness and adversity, but also contribute to the relief of our distressed brethren.[21]

Noting the early pride of Blacks prior to Emancipation in helping themselves, Benjamin Quarles stated of the mutual aid societies formed by them that, "a Negro family, no matter how poor, was determined that no town hearse would ever drive to its door."[22]

Despite the poverty of most free Blacks North and South, in both regions, some did prosper. For example, Philadelphia maintained the largest population of Blacks in the North prior to the Civil War and also the most prosperous. In 1849, a report listed 166 Black shopkeepers and tradesmen over the age of twenty-one.[23] William Still maintained a flourishing coal business while William Whipple and Stephen Smith amassed a fortune in the lumber business in Philadelphia. And, Robert Purvis was independently wealthy due to an inheritance from his White father. Black doctors fared well due to their Black clientele; however, few lawyers did.[24]

Ira Berlin found evidence of numerous well-to-do free Black artisans and property owners in the South. During the 1850's, at least seventy-five Whites rented their homes from Black landlords.[25] In 1850, New Orleans could count five Black jewelers, four doctors, an architect, and fifty-two merchants. And Black abolitionist Martin Delany in his 1852 book, The Condition, Elevation, Emigration and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States, enumerates the Black professionals and entrepreneurs in the nation.[26]

Of the small number of Black landowners, business people, and professionals, few Black females could be found represented. Positions referred to as "business" held by Black women were primarily those of needlework and hairdressing.[27]

Thus, the survival of the Black woman and the Black man became interrelated. When necessary, the Black woman supported the Black man and likewise he supported her when possible.

Throughout the pre-Civil War years, self-reliance, race obligation, and "uplift" became the central themes of Black leaders. Cooperation was needed between the free Black and the slave Black regardless of class or sex. At a Black national convention in 1848, Frederick Douglass impressed upon his audience their obligation to aid the members of their race still enslaved:

> As one rises, all must rise, and as one fall, all must fall. Having our feet on the rock of freedom, we must drag our brethren from the slimy depths of slavery, ignorance, and ruin. Every one of us should be ashamed to consider himself free, while his brother is a slave.[28]

An Englishman, John Scoble, visiting the United States, observed in 1853, "the free people of color, with few exceptions, are true to their brethren in bonds, and are determined to remain by them whatever the cost."[29]

Regardless of economic status, free Blacks consistently focused their attention towards their slave kin in the South and sought to aid them in various ways. Poor Black women--as did the men--often worked for years to purchase relatives and friends. White abolitionist Theodore Weld observed in 1830 this phenomenon during a visit to Ohio:

> There are scores of black women here who work day and night taking in washing or in domestic service so as to acquire the means to purchase relatives still in bondage. One paid $800 for her husband; another $400 for her mother; still another $500 for her daughter. It takes years of unceasing toil for such purchases to be consummated, but it is in this way, I learned, that mothers, daughters, fathers, husbands, and sons were reunited.[30]

Fanny Jackson Coppin, a noted Black educator and community worker of the nineteenth century freedom was purchased for $125 by an Aunt who earned only $6 a month as a domestic, yet saved over the years until she had acquired the amount to purchase Fanny.[31]

Some Black women, unable to purchase their freedom or that of others, decided to "steal away." The most noted was the legendary Harriet Tubman. Known to her people simply as "Moses," Tubman returned to the South nineteen times after her escape from slavery leading approximately 300 slaves out of bondage. In the story of her life, Tubman stated that although she had become free when escaping, it was important to her that other Blacks should also become free and returned to rescue them.[32] Devoting her entire life to her race, she served as a nurse, spy, and scout for the Union Army during the Civil War. In 1863 she led a troop of 300 soldiers into South Carolina, destroying millions of dollors in property and rescuing nearly 800, "without losing a man or receiving a scratch." Having had a $40,000 bounty for her capture during slavery and never receiving rank nor pay for her service in the Army, after the war's end, her efforts were forgotten.[33] In 1868, Frederick Douglass compared the praise he had received with the obscurity Tubman had encountered:

> Most that I have done and suffered in the service of our cause has been in public, and I have received much encouragement at every step of the way. I have wrought in the day--you in the night. I have had the applause of the crowd and the satisfaction that comes of being approved by the multitude, while the most that you have done has been witnessed by a few trembling, scarred, and foot-sore bondmen and women, whom you have led out of bondage, and whose heartfelt 'God bless you' has been your only reward. The midnight sky and the silent stars have been the witnesses of your devotion to freedom and of your heroism . . . .Much that you have done would seem improbable to those who do not know you as I know you.[34]

Douglass' freedom had been aided greatly by a Black woman, Anna Murray, who ultimately became his first wife. Douglass met the free Anna Murray in Baltimore during the 1830's while he was still a slave. A romance ensued and Anna, who worked as a domestic, gave Douglass her savings of her employment to escape. A week after Douglass escaped to New York in 1838, she married him and set up home in New Bedford, Massachusetts. In the early years of their marriage, Anna Murray worked as a washwoman and later bound shoes.[35] Thus, Douglass, who would become a great spokesman for the rights of Blacks and women, was indebted to a member of both groups for his freedom.

WHITE EMANCIPATORS AND BLACK ELEVATORS

Although many Whites participated in anti-slavery activities, by the 1830's Blacks often voiced the opinion that these activities were more theoretical than practical and tended to stress merely the abolition of southern slavery while overlooking the social, political and economic condition of Blacks in the North. Further, many Blacks complained of the prejudice and condescension they experienced in their associations with the White abolitionists. One Black commented, "whatever they [White abolitionists] do for us savors of pity, and is done at arm's length," while another commented that White abolitionists were only interested in the emancipation of Blacks and not their "elevation."[36]

White abolitionist Angelina Grimke wrote to fellow anti-slavery worker and friend Abby Kelley of Quaker inconsistent principles and practices when it came to the question of Black equality. Grimke wrote:

> It is true, they [Friends] bore a noble testimony against Slavery and they washed their hands in innocency, but I do not think Friends ever conceived the noble and generous scheme of elevating the free people of color to an <u>equality</u> with the whites. . . .I can truly say that altho' I lived exclusively among them [Friends] for 6 years, that I imbibed <u>no</u> exalted views of human rights, and found <u>no</u> sympathy for the free people of color in consequence of the crushing withering influence of Prejudice.[37]

Black Quaker abolitionist and schoolteacher, Sarah Mapp Douglass of Philadelphia discontinued her membership at the Arch Street Meeting in the 1830's because she was segregated at the services. Of the Quakers, Miss Douglass stated, "I have heard it frequently remarked and have observed it myself, that in proportion as we [Blacks] become intellectual and respectable, so in proportion does their [the Quakers'] disgust and prejudice increase."[38] And, even by 1860, Frederick Douglass would observe, "consciously or unconsciously, almost every white man approaches a colored man with an air of superiority and condescension."[39] Hence, Black abolitionists formed and sought to "elevate" while most White abolitionists sought to "emancipate." In their study of Black abolitionists, Jane and William Pease found "the patterns of black and white antislavery were distinct and sometimes almost mutually exclusive."[40]

By the 1830's, Blacks exerted visible and viable efforts towards self-help and racial "uplift." In 1827, the first Black newspaper, <u>Freedom's Journal</u> stated its purpose, reflecting the attitude of many free Blacks: "we wish to plead our own cause. Too long have others spoken for us."[41] And, at a Black national convention in 1848, the body resolved "to be dependent, is to be degraded."

Black women also espoused the "do for self" philosophy. Mary Ann Shadd Cary is one such example. Born free in Delaware in 1823, she became a teacher of Black youth after attending a Quaker school during her youth. Moving to Canada after the Fugitive Slave Law was instituted, she

along with several Black men established a weekly newspaper in 1854 entitled The Provincial Freeman and selected as its motto: "Self-Reliance is the True Road to Independence."[43]

Mary's father, Abraham D. Shadd, was an active Black abolitionist and was one of the founding members of the Black national convention and served as president of the group in 1833.[44] His activities had an apparent influence upon his daughter. With the motto of her newspaper reflecting her racial philosophy, Mary opened a school in Canada and taught there until the Civil War years when she returned to the States to serve as an army recruiter.[45]

Sarah Parker Remond, a free born Black female of Salem, Massachusetts, also was the product of an abolitionist family. Her brother Charles was the first Black to address an American audience on the topic of slavery. In 1856, Sarah began to lecture against slavery and traveled along with her brother in the United States.[46] By 1859, she journeyed to England, Scotland, and Ireland to arouse the sympathies of the British to aid in the abolition of slavery in America. While lecturing on behalf of all slaves, Sarah made a special plea for the female slave whom she felt fared worse than the slave male. In a review of her lecture while in Dublin, the Anti-Slavery Advocate reported:

> She made her appeal to women on behalf of the female slave, the most deplorably and helplessly wretched of human sufferers. Of all who drooped and writhed under the inflictions of this horrible system, the greatest suffered was defenceless woman [sic].[47]

After the Civil War, Sarah Remond continued her lectures on behalf of the "uplift" of her race. Now it was the elevation of the freedmen that dominated her lectures. Returning to England again in 1867 to lecture, by the 1870's she migrated to Italy to make her home.[48]

The death of a free Black man attempting to escape as he was being resold into slavery due to the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 provided the impetus for Frances Ellen Watkins Harper to become a noted Black female abolitionist lecturer. After the above incident, Harper write, "Upon that grave I pledged myself to the Anti-Slavery cause." Born free in Maryland in 1825, Harper was orphaned by the age of three and raised and educated by relatives in Baltimore. At the age of thirteen, she set out to earn her own living first as a domestic and later teaching school in Ohio and Pennsylvania. By the 1850's, she had secured employment as a seamstress; however, the enactment of the Fugitive Slave Law indicated to her that the situation for Blacks was getting worse and she pondered with the idea of becoming actively involved in racial "uplift." Writing a friend on the subject, Harper asked, "What would you do if you were in my place? Would you give up and go back and work at your trade (dress-making)?" Harper answered her own question by further writing, "There are no people that need all the benefits resulting from a well-directed education more than we do. The condition of our people, the wants of our children, and the welfare of our race demand the aid of every helping hand, the God-speed of every Christian heart."[49]

Being deeply immerged in the "uplift" concept, Harper became a lecturer of the anti-slavery movement. Her first lecture was entitled "The Elevation and Education of our People." Throughout the pre-Civil War, in addition to her lectures, Harper was a noted agent of the Underground Railroad and in his history of that institution, William Still noted that Harper treated passengers as if "they were her own near Kin" and "so deep was her interest in the success of the Road, she frequently made it her business to forward donations, and carefully inquire into the state of the treasurey."[50]

Cary, Remond, and Harper were atypical of Black women of the pre-Civil War era in that they were born free, received an education and were able to obtain material comfort. Yet, all three felt bound by the miseries of their less fortunate race members. Cary was so devoted to educating Black youth that she jeopardized her health. In 1844, her father urged her not to sacrifice her physical condition and pleaded with her to give up her teaching post.[51] Although affluent, Sarah Remond had experienced numerous incidents of discrimination. She too suffered physically from the miles of traveling and experienced insults as a result of her lectures. Dorothy Porter in a biographical sketch of Remond concludes, "Her [Remond's] life is an illustration of the untiring efforts of one who desired to help her race in every way and who suffered much mentally and physically in the long fight for the abolition of slavery and the betterment of race relations."[52] Harper was so devoted to the cause of racial "uplift" that she abandoned her profession to become a full time lecturer. She gave not only her time but her money to the cause of equality for Blacks. Her efforts continued during Reconstruction where she traveled throughout the South lecturing free of charge to Black women.[53]

In addition to the above individual efforts of Black women, many organizational efforts of Black women were prevalent. As the anti-slavery movement intensified, many Black women were in the forefront. For example, when William Lloyd Garrison, famed abolitionist and editor of The Liberator, lectured in Salem, Massachusetts during the fall of 1832 and commented that there were no Black anti-slavery societies, a letter to the editor appeared in the paper shortly thereafter informing him that there was indeed such a society formed by "females of color" in February of that year. The writer enclosed a copy of the constitution of the Female Anti-Slavery Society of Salem, apparently the first such organization by American women. As was the primary purpose of all Black organizations formed during this period, the women stated their purpose as being for "mutual improvement" and "to promote the welfare of our color."[54] The writer also informed the readers that there was still another Black female organization established for ever fifteen years--the Colored Female Religious and Moral Society of Salem formed in 1818. In a subsequent issue of the Liberator, a copy of the organization's constitution was also published. Although termed "religious and moral," the constitution reveals that the group was also an educational and benevolent organization. Membership was open to any female agreeing to conform to the by-laws of the constitution and pay the annual fifty-two cents dues. The group resolved to keep "a charitable watch over one another; to aid the sick and destitute members, and to meet weekly to study history, read interesting and useful books, and write and converse upon the sufferings of our enslaved sisters."[55]

THE CULT OF TRUE WOMANHOOD AND BLACK WOMEN

As activities to abolish slavery in the early and mid-nineteenth century intensified, the nation began to define a new role for women. Described by Barbara Welter as "the cult of true womanhood," this role stressed piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity for females. Much was said and written during this period of woman's natural fragility and "proper sphere." Innocence and modesty were essential for the "true woman." And, surrounding the formation and development of this new and perfect woman was the "proper" education--primarily literary subjects, the creative arts and domestic science.[56]

This new concept of "true womanhood," of course, referred to White women. With the masses of Black people being enslaved and the debate as to whether they were humans being a popular topic (to be resolved in 1857 by the Supreme Court Dred Scott decision ruling that Blacks were "beings [not people] of an inferior order, and altogether unfit to associate with the White race. . .and so far inferior that they have no rights that the white man was bound to respect"),[57] Black men could not "protect" their women as the men of the "true woman." Even on the eve of the Civil War in 1864 at the last Black national convention before Emancipation, the body issued a "Declaration of Wrongs and Rights" of Blacks (note the sequence of words). This declaration vividly expresses that Black people had no personhood:

> As a people, we have been denied the ownership of our bodies, our wives, homes, children, and the products of our own labor; we have been compelled, under the pain of death, to submit to wrongs deeper and darker than the earth ever witnessed in the case of any other people; we have been forced to silence and inaction in full presence of the infernal spectacle of our sons groaning under the lash, our daughters ravished, our wives violated, and our firesides desolated, while we ourselves have been led to the shambles and sold like beasts of the field.[58]

Black women could not be viewed as fragile or delicate when they often did the same work as the slave man. Further, the question of purity was absurd given the rampant sexual assaults upon the slave women by overseers and masters as well as the frequent mating of slaves to increase the slave population.

A reaction to the "cult of true womanhood" for White females was the forming of hundreds of anti-slavery, benevolent and other types of charitable groups. A recent study by Barbara Berg of women in the city from 1800-1860 found the primary motivation for the proliferation of such organizations was to alleviate boredom, loneliness and to develop self-identity. The "cult of true womanhood" left most middle-class White women feeling useless and their writings frequently expressed the need to be productive.[59]

Thus, women joined organizations in large numbers in the 1830's. By 1835, Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society boasted a membership of 300 and by 1838 there were approximately 150 female societies with a membership of 10,000. Female asylums also became numerous during the first decade of the nineteenth century.[60]

Reflecting the difference in status of Black and White women, organizations of the latter were vastly different from those created by the former in both purpose and composition. Organizations established by White females were for "respectable" women (normally upper and middle-class). The constitutions of White female societies tended to be apologetic in nature regarding purpose and intent and reflected a strong male dependence. Furthermore, few White female groups admitted Black women. Members of the Female Anti-Slavery Society of Fall River, Massachusetts threatened to dissolve when the issue of admitting Black women was raised.[61] And when Sarah M. Grimke moved at the second anti-slavery convention of American women in 1838 that abolitionists identify themselves with "oppressed Americans" by:

> sitting with them in places of worship, by appearing with them in our streets, by giving them our countenance in steam-boats and stages, by visiting them at their homes and encouraging them to visit us, receiving them as we do our white fellow citizens[62]

numerous delegates voted in the negative on the motion.

While White females such as the Grimke sisters, Abby Kelley Foster and Lucretia Mott believed in social equality between the races, many White female anti-slavery workers did not share such a view and often knew little of anti-slavery principles in general. Making this observation in 1839, abolitionist Hannah Smith wrote to Abby Kelley of the lack of interest and knowledge of some female abolitionists:

> they [white females] appeared to join [anti-slavery societies] more because their husbands were abolitionists than they themselves felt interested, and hardly seemed to understand the principles of the cause they were advocating. Indeed, I do not know of one anti-slavery woman of the right stamp in Connecticut of sufficient information and energy to organize a Society or manage its concerns.[63]

Observers of the White female organizers conclude these activities were often self-serving. Berg wrote, "voluntary associations helped women to escape from the bondage of the woman-belle ideal. . .Membership in an association provided the upper and middle-class woman, traditionally isolated at home, an opportunity to relate to other women of similar background."[64] Ella Murphy in her study of women in the abolition movement also believed, "some of their [white females] motives for entering the movement apparently did not always spring from universal human sympathy." And Blanche Glassman Hersh in her research of feminist-abolitionists in America noted even those White females who ardently tried to aid Blacks and their causes were not "free from the feminists'

New England sense of superiority and self-righteousness. . . .Even the most compassionate women tended to act as patronizing benefactors."[65]

In contrast, Black female anti-slavery activists included poor working women as well as the middle-class. When the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society invited the Black women of Salem to contribute to an upcoming Anti-Slavery Fair in Boston, the organization's representative replied that they had not been given enough time to prepare for the event. Writing to the Boston women, the Salem representative said, "they [the members of the Salem Female Anti-Slavery Society] all have hearts that would gladly do it, but have not the means to purchase articles, or time, to make that would be necessary to furnish such a table as we should wish. Nearly all the members of our board support themselves, by dressmaking or teaching school."[66] And, when a group of Philadelphia Black females sent a small amount of money to William Lloyd Garrison in support of the Liberator, they enclosed a note stating:

> . . .we beg of you Sir, to accept the inclosed sum, as a small tribute towards the great cause you have espoused and although it is not in their power, as females, to do much, yet . . .are willing to aid, according to ability, in giving a more extensive circulation to the Liberator. . .T' is not wished that this trifling gift should be publicly noticed.[67]

Thus, poor and middle class Black women shouldered a sizable amount of responsibility during the pre-Civil War era. Rosetta Douglass Sprague, the daughter of Frederick Douglass, recalled her mother's activities as an agent of the Underground Railroad and her participation in numerous anti-slavery societies and sewing circles: "it was mother's custom to put aside the earnings from a certain number of shoes that she had bound as her donation to the Anti-Slavery cause."[68] And the Boston Anti-Slavery Society noted in 1839 the efforts of a group of Black women to form the Samaritan Asylum for indigent colored children who were barred from White asylums. The report stated, "though feeble at present, will, if sustained [the asylum], prove a blessing to multitudes of those who are denied the privileges of similar institutions in our country."[69]

The increased participation of White women in various organizations led to their awareness of the oppressed state of women in the nation. This awareness resulted in the emergence of the women's rights movement. This movement coincided and later collided with the movement of Blacks. As women appealed to men to recognize them as equals, Black women also appealed to White women for the same consideration. At a women's rights convention in 1851, Black abolitionist and feminist Sojourner Truth queried her White audience if Black women were women:

> Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And, ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed, and planted, and gathered into barns. . . I could work as much and eat as much as a man--when I could get it --and hear the lash as well! And, ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen them most all sold off to slavery and

> when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And, ain't I a woman?[70]

As the Civil War came to a close and Emancipation of Blacks appeared eminent, women's rights advocates sought to include within the change of status of Blacks a change in status of women. Frederick Douglass strongly supported women's rights, but he believed it was then "the Negro's hour," meaning that the abolition of slavery and the termination of discrimination against Blacks was of primary importance. Douglass explained to the women the difference in being discriminated against as a Black, as a woman, and as a Black woman. While Douglass agreed that sex discrimination did exist, the complaints of the White women according to him were "trifling" when compared to the sufferings of the Black women who not only endured the hardships of being female but suffered "ten thousand wrongs of slavery."[71] Thus, said Douglass in comparing the White female with the Black female:

> It is hard to be underpaid for labor faithfully performed; it is harder still not to be paid for labor at all. It is hard that women should be limited in her opportunities for education; it is harder still to be deprived of all means of education. It is hard for the widow only to receive the third part of her deceased husband; it is harder still to be a chattel person to all intents and purposes. It is hard only to enjoy only a qualified right to one's children; but it is harder still for a woman to have no rights which white men are bound to respect.[72]

And, when women's rights leaders such as Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton campaigned to have the fourteenth amendment defeated because it only guaranteed the rights of men to vote, Douglass angrily charged:

> When women, because they are women, are dragged from their homes and hung upon lamp-posts; when their children are torn from their arms and their brains dashed to the pavement; when they are objects of insults and outrage at every turn; when they are in danger of having their homes burnt down over their heads; when their children are not allowed to enter schools; then they will have an urgency to obtain the ballot.[73]

A listener in the audience retorted, "is that not all true about black women?" Douglass replied, "yes, yes, yes; it is true of the black woman, but not because she is a woman, but because she is black."[74]

In general, Black men viewed the women of their race with a greater sense of equality than society did of women as a whole during the pre-Civil War era. This was perhaps due to the relative absence of sex-defined roles during slavery and also due to the importance of Black women in the survival of the race by aiding in slave escapes, revolts, economic and other types of activities. More importantly, the "cult of true womanhood" concept simply did not and could not apply to the lives of most Black women prior to the Civil War. Thus, Black women as well as Black men were implied when the Black national convention in 1848 proclaimed:

> We are one people--one in general complexion, one in a common degradation, one in popular estimation. As one rises, all must rise, and as one fall all must fall.[75]

One finds cooperative efforts between Black men and women throughout the early nineteenth century, an uncommon event for the general society during that period. Organizing with their men, Black women established and held positions on vigilance committees that aided runaway slaves by providing food, clothing, money and assistance in finding employment. For example, two of the seven Black directors of the New England Freedom Association whose function was to "extend a helping hand to all who may bid adieu to whips and chains" were females. Similarly, four of the nine members of the Black vigilance committee of Cleveland were also women.[76]

Historians of slavery consistently find a unique relationship between slave men and women. Eugene Genovese in study Roll, Jordan, Roll wrote, "What has usually been viewed as a debilitating female supremacy was in fact a closer approximation to a healthy sexual equality than was possible for whites and perhaps for many postbellum blacks. . . .The strength of the women did not necessarily undermine the men; often, it supoorted them." Thomas Webber in his study of education of the slave quarters made a similar observation. He wrote, "One is struck by the absence of the familiar theme of male superiority and by the lack of evidence to support the view that the quarters was a female-dominated society." Although traditional sex roles as cooking for females and hunting for men were prevalent, it was not uncommon to find slave narratives depicting men as sewing, caring for children, or cooking. By the same token, women were frequently found as preachers, doctors, conjurors, storytellers, champion cotton pickers and respected leaders within the slave community.[77]

Thus, early-on during the nineteenth century, Black men expressed support and encouragement of Black women and their activities. In 1848, Black leaders resolved at a national conference that "we fully believe in the equality of the sexes, therefore. . .we hereby invite females to take part in our deliberations." And, when Black men formed the Colored National Labor Union in 1869, the group admitted Black women and elected Mary Shadd Cary to the Executive Committee of the group. The body voted to uphold equal rights for women and further stated that they were "profiting by the mistakes heretofore made by our white fellow citizens in omitting women."[78]

This acceptance and necessity of Black women in the struggle for racial equality fostered an independence in them to pass down generationally. Even by the turn of the century, John Daniels in his study of Blacks in Boston observed that "with the Negroes there is a closer approximation to equality between the sexes than is yet the case among those of the other race." He concludes that this was due to the poor economic condition of Blacks and further commented:

> they [Black women] have made a relatively greater economic contribution within their race than have white women in theirs, and so they have attained a place of relatively greater importance in the social order of their own community. Negro women manifest a marked independence, coupled with a sober realization of the extent to which the welfare of the race is in their hands. Negro men recognize and respect their position. The women take and are given a very important share in race affairs.[79]

Of the many contributions to be made by Black women during the antebellum period, their role in education was one of their most salient.

EDUCATION FOR 'ELEVATION'

The intellectual inferiority of the Black race was the primary justification for slavery. In their struggle towards freedom, Black Americans viewed education as their greatest liberating force. Educational historian Vincent Franklin in describing Blacks' 'attitude' towards education wrote, "Schooling, both formal and informal, was judged to be the main thoroughfare by which blacks could leave 'Babylon' and reach 'Canaan-Land'."[80] Central to their mission of "uplifting," Blacks sought to improve their education to help dispel the widespread myth of the dull Black intellect. In the 1829 Appeal of the militant David Walker, he told the members of his race:

> I would crawl on my hands and knees through mud and mire, to sit at the feet of a learned man, where I would sit and humbly supplicate him to instill into me, that which devils nor tyrants could remove, only with my life--for coloured people to acquire learning in this country, make tyrants quake and tremble on their sandy foundation. . .the bare name of educating the coloured people, scares our cruel oppressor almost to death.[81]

The editor of the New York Black newspaper, The Rights of All, Samuel Cornish in 1829 also believed that a demonstration of Blacks' ability to learn would rid the nation of prejudice and urged his readers to educate themselves and their children. Writing that "knowledge is power," Cornish stated that when Black children were educated "merit will form the character and respectability. The term Africa will no longer be synonymous with that of degradation."[82]

This belief was again voiced at a Black national conference in 1832 with the body resolving that "if we [Black people] ever expect to see the influence of prejudice decrease and ourselves respected, it must be by the blessings of an enlighten [sic] education."[83] At each Black convention prior to Emancipation, delegates protested the sparse educational opportunities of their people.

There were scattered opportunities for both free Blacks and slaves to become literate prior to the 1830's throughout the nation. However, education for Blacks was viewed as dangerous after the firey Appeal of David Walker of 1829 and 1830 slave revolt of Nat Turner--both literate men. After the 1830's all the Southern States instituted laws prohibiting the education of Blacks, thus forcing such activities underground. Charles B. Woodson found in a study of Black education prior to the Civil War, "Clandestine schools were in operation in most of the large cities and towns of the South where such enlightenment of the Negroes was prohibited by law."[84]

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries Whites educated Blacks primarily for religious and moral reasons. While these reasons were not different from the purpose of educating society in general, education for Blacks was also viewed by many Whites as a means of civilizing and making obedient and loyal slaves.

Hence the quality as well as the quantity of education was of great concern to Black Americans. Even when schools were established for Blacks, they normally only provided rudimentary subjects. The White trustees of the African Free School established by the New York Manumission Society in 1787 for Blacks discouraged higher education for them by the 1820's stating it was beyond the "sphere" of Blacks. David Walker in his Appeal reported an incident of a White teacher forbidding a Black student to study grammar because he viewed the subject as a privilege for White students only.[85]

Throughout the nineteenth century "scientific" studies were produced to confirm that in brain size, lung capacity, and a variety of physiological and psychological traits, Blacks were intellectually inferior to Whites. The American Colonization Society, formed in 1816 to attempt to return Blacks to Africa, reported: "Educate him [the Black man] and have added little or nothing to his happiness--you have unfitted him for the society and sympathies of his degraded kindred, and yet you have not procured for him and cannot procure for him any admission into the society and sympathy of the white man." Another stated, Blacks "after a certain age did not correspondingly advance in learning--their intellect being apparently incapable of being cultured beyond a particular point."[86] It was in such an atmosphere of opinion that Blacks were taught by Whites.

Thus, Black teachers for Black students became an important issue during the early nineteenth century. The Freedom's Journal protested the small number of schools for Blacks and the poor quality of teachers provided for them: "we cannot believe that almost anyone is qualified to keep a school for our children."[87] Further, most Blacks believed that White teachers would not encourage Black students to "elevate" their race. Expressing this point of view, in a report of the 1853 Black national convention, it was stated that "their [White teachers] whole tendency is to change him [the Black student], not his condition--to ed-

ucate him out of his sympathies, not to quicken and warm his sympathies, for all that is of worth to him is his elevation, and the elevation of his people."[88]

On the heels of the early Black educational endeavors by Whites, Blacks as they became able opened their own schools. The first was a Black female. In 1793 a slave, Catherine Ferguson, purchased her freedom in New York and took forty-eight Black and White children from an almshouse and opened "Katy Ferguson's School for the Poor." In the same year, the Committee for Improving the Condition of Free Blacks in Pennsylvania opened a school and recommended a qualified Black female. Prince Hall, the founder of the Black masons, established a school in Massachusetts in 1798 and by 1838 there were ten private schools being operated in Philadelphia by Black teachers.[89]

As previously mentioned, because Black women were necessary for the survival of the Black community, unlike women in society as a whole, they were encouraged to become educated to aid in the improvement of their race. In the New York Black newspaper, The Weekly Advocate, an 1837 article entitled "To the Females of Colour" urged Black women to seek an education. The article stated, "In any enterprise for the improvement of our people, either moral or mental, our hands would be palsied without woman's influence." Thus, the article continued, "Let our beloved female friends, then, rouse up, and exert all their power, in encouraging, and sustaining this effort [education] which we have made to disabuse the public mind of the misrepresentations made of our character; and to show the world, that there is virtue among us, though concealed; talent, though buried; intelligence, though overlooked."[90] In other words, both Black females and males would demonstrate the race's intelligence, morality and ingenuity.

Education for the Black female as well as the male was so important that often families relocated prior to the Civil War to areas where their daughters could receive a better education. For example, when Blanche V. Harris was denied admission to a White female seminary in the State of Michigan, where she lived in the 1850's, her entire family moved to Oberlin, Ohio where she and her four brothers and sisters could receive an education. She graduated from the Ladies' Department of Oberlin College in 1860 and a sister also graduated ten years later. Similarly, the parents of Mary Jane Patterson, who in 1862 became the first Black female to earn a college degree in America, also moved from North Carolina in the 1850's to educate their children. Four of the Patterson children graduated from Oberlin College (three being female).[91]

As arguments in the larger society continued regarding coeducation, in schools established by Blacks, females were included with the males from the beginning. A perusal of advertisements of schools in the Black and abolitionist newspapers indicates that institutions such as "B. F. Hughes School for Coloured Children of Both Sexes" and

"Evening School for People of Color of Both Sexes" were typical.[92]

The largest Black literary society of New York, the Phoenix, organized in 1833, provided lectures, evening schools and a high school available to both males and females and employed Black teachers of both sexes. Through the persuasion of Black citizens of Philadelphia, the Institute for Colored Youth opened in 1852 by Quakers became a coeducational high school.[93]

Education within the Black community extended beyond the classroom and was augmented greatly by the formation of literary and educational societies. Philadelphia was the leader in such organizations. In 1831, three years after the first Black male literary society was established, a group of Black women organized the Female Literary Association of Philadelphia. This group viewed its efforts not only as a means of self-improvement but race improvement. In the Preamble of the group's constitution, the women stated that they believed it their "duty. . .as daughters of a despised race, to use our utmost endeavors to enlighten the understanding, to cultivate the talents entrusted to our keeping, that by so doing, we may in a great measure, break down the strong barrier of prejudice, and raise ourselves to an equality with those of our fellow beings, who differ from us in complexion."[94] Poems, essays, short stories were submitted unsigned to be critiqued by the members of the group. The Liberator often published samples of these literary works to demonstrate the capabilities of the Black women. After visiting a meeting of the organization, William Lloyd Garrison reported, "if the traducers of the colored race could be acquainted with the moral worth, just refinement, and large intelligence of this association, their mouths would hereafter be dumb."[95]

In Boston, the Afro-American Female Intelligence Society appeared a year after the Philadelphia group was established. While a literary society, the group was also a charitable organization. Funds from the group's treasury were utilized to purchase books, newspapers and renting a meeting room. The society provided a dollar a week to any member who became ill. In addition, the group agreed to aid any member "in case of unforeseen and afflictive event," stating, "it shall be the duty of the Society to aid them as far as in their power."[96] This was the first such society among Blacks in Boston.

In 1832, the group of Black females of Boston sponsored the first public lecture to be given by an American female. The deeply religious Maria W. Stewart, having had less than six weeks of education, urged Black women to improve their education and aid in the struggle for racial "uplift." She told her audience: "Oh, daughters of Africa, awake! arise!, show forth the world that yea are endowed with noble and exalted faculties. . .let us promote ourselves and improve our own talents." She expressed the importance of higher education and academies for Black women and suggested that the women pool their resources to establish a high school. Informing her listeners that "knowledge is power," Stewart also urged them to establish businesses and become economically independent. "Don't say I can't, but I will," was her challenge to her fellow

sisters. Giving four lectures in Boston in 1832-33, Stewart continued to impress upon Blacks their duty and obligation to the race. In the 1830's she moved to New York City and was educated through membership in the Black female literary societies of the city and subsequently became a teacher.[97]

The unusually outspoken Maria Stewart demonstrated the important role that many Black women believed they had in the Black movement. Her radical presentations paved the way for many other Black women to take the public platform and plead for the rights of their race.

Another Black female took a feminist stance on the importance of Black women and their education of the Black community. Several months after Freedom's Journal began publication, under the pseudonym of Matilda, a Black woman critized the newspaper for insufficient emphasis being placed upon the education of the women of the race. In her letter she argued:

> There are difficulties, and great difficulties, in the way of our [Black women's] advancement; but that should only stir us to greater efforts. We possess not the advantages with those of our sex, whose skins are not coloured like our own, but we can improve what little we have, and make our one talent produce two-fold. The influence that we have over the male sex demands, that our minds should be instructed and improved with the principles of education and religion, in order that this influence can be properly directed. Ignorant ourselves, how can we be expected to form the minds of our youth, and conduct them in the paths of knowledge?. . .I would address myself to all mothers, and say to them, that while it is necessary to possess a knowledge of cookery, and the various mysteries of pudding-making, something more is requisite. It is their bounden duty to store their daughters' minds with useful learning. They should be made to devote their leisure time to reading books, whence they would derive valuable information, which could never be taken from them.[98]

The aforementioned Mary Ann Shadd (later Cary) also voiced her opinions in the North Star regarding the need for all Black people to work together and independently of Whites. In 1849, Shadd wrote:

> We have been holding conventions for years--have been assembling together and whining over our difficulties and afflictions, passing resolutions on resolutions to any extent;. . .We should do more and talk less. What intellectually we most need, and the absence of which we most feel, is the knowledge of the white man. . . .The possibility of final success, when using proper means, the means to be used, the possibility [sic] of bringing about the desired end ourselves, and not waiting for the whites of the country to do so, should be impressed on the people by those teachers as they assume to be the only true ones; or at least there should be no hindrance to their seeing for themselves.[99]

Viewing education as a vehicle for self-reliance and self-improvement, Black women in the establishment of formal schools and educational organizations saw themselves as a vital link in the transmittance of knowledge and race values to their people. The women's importance to the Black community resulted in their often speaking out as did Stewart, Matilda, and Shadd as to the best solution for race "uplift." The literary societies established by Black women prior to the Civil War performed great services within the Black communities by providing lectures, libraries, and reading-rooms as well as instruction. By the 1840's, the Ohio Ladies Education Society formed by Black women in 1837 was reported to have done "more towards the establishment of schools for the education of colored people at this time in Ohio than any other organized group."[100]

For the Black female as for her male counterpart, a secondary education was diffcult to obtain prior to the Civil War. Thus, the founding of St. Frances Academy for Colored Girls in Baltimore, a boarding school, in 1829 was an important event for the race. The institution was established by a group of French educated Black nuns (the Oblate Order) who had migrated to Baltimore from Santo Domingo. Most of the women were from prosperous families and one, Elizabeth Lange, who became the First Superior of the Order and head of the school, had operated a free school for poor Black children in her home prior to the opening of St. Frances. Lange taught her classes in both French and Spanish. Because the St. Frances Academy was the only institution available to Black females which offered courses above primary level, the school was well known among Blacks with girls being sent from the South and Canada there to study. To preserve their native language, the Sisters conducted classes at the Academy on alternate days completely in French.[101] By 1865, the school was coed and known simply as the St. Frances Academy. The Academy maintained an outstanding academic reputation and in the 1871 "Special Report of the Commissioner of Education on the Improvement of Public Schools in the District of Columbia" was cited for its academic merits:

> . . .From the first it [the St. Frances Academy for Colored Girls] has been through all its years, almost forty in number, a well-appointed female seminary, amply supplied with cultivated and capable teachers, who have given good training in all the branches of a refined and useful education, including all that is usually taught in well regulated female seminaries.[102]

The Institute for Colored Youth in Philadelphia, established in 1852 by the Society of Friends as the first coed classical high school and the Normal School for Colored Girls founded by a White female Myrtilla Miner in the District of Columbia produced some of the first formally trained Black female teachers in the North prior to Emancipation.[103]

Although opportunities for the education of Blacks were overwhelmingly in the North prior to the Civil War, many clandestine schools existed in the South during this period. For example, numerous such schools were reported in Savannah, Georgia. Julian Froumountaine, a Black woman from Santo Domingo openly conducted a free school for Blacks in Savannah

as early as 1819 and secretly after the 1830's when education for Blacks in the South became illegal. Another Black woman, known only as Miss DeaVeaux, opened an underground school in 1838 and operated it for over twenty-five years without the knowledge of local Whites.[104] Susan King Taylor, who served as a nurse and teacher for the Union Army during the Civil War, was educated in several of the "secret" schools of Savannah. In her Reminiscences, Taylor recalled the methods devised by the Black pupils to deceive the unsuspecting Whites.[105] Similar schools were in other areas of the South. In Natchez, Mississippi, Milla Granson became literate through the teachings of her master's children and taught hundreds of slaves to read and write in what they termed Milla's "midnight" school because the classes were held after midnight. These educational activities reveal not only the importance that Blacks placed upon education but also demonstrate the risk that they took to obtain it. The number of percentage of slaves who were literate at the time of Emancipation is debatable. Most who obtained any learning, regardless of how small, passed on their knowledge to other slaves.[106] The following account of Mandy Jones, who was a slave in Mississippi, recalls the manner in which slaves on her plantation acquired learning:

> Dey [slaves] would dig pits, an kiver the spot wid bushes an' vines. . .An' dey had pit schools in slave days. . .Way out in de woods. . .an' de slaves would slip out o' de Quarters at night, an go to dese pits, an some niggah dat had some learnin' would have a school.[107]

The deprivation of education from Southern Blacks would spark the interest in many Black women after the Civil War to become educators of their race.

One such example is Fanny Jackson Coppin. Born a slave in 1837 in the District of Columbia, her freedom was purchased (probably by the time she was twelve) by an aunt who earned but six dollars a month but saved until she had the necessary $125 for Fanny's manumission.[108] She was sent to New Bedford, Massachusetts and later to Newport, Rhode Island, where Fanny's relatives believed her educational opportunities would be greater. Surrounded by the mutual aid societies and other self-help groups, as a young girl Fanny decided as her life's goal "to get an education and teach my people." While working as a domestic in Newport, her employers allowed her to hire a tutor for one hour, three days a week. She later attended the segregated schools of Newport and by 1859 had completed the normal course at the Rhode Island State Normal School. By this time, Fanny's life's goal had expanded to meet the challenge of the antebellum Senator John C. Calhoun who stated that if he would find a Black who could conjugate a Greek verb, he would change his opinion regarding the inferior intellect of Blacks. Thus, deciding to continue her education, she learned of a college in Ohio whose curriculum was the same as Harvard's that not only admitted women, but Blacks. With financial assistance from her relatives and a scholarship from Bishop Daniel Payne of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, she enrolled in Oberlin College in 1860.[109]

Recalling her days at Oberlin, Fanny Jackson stated that although the college in theory offered the "gentleman's course" (as the collegiate department was termed) to females, in practice Oberlin Administrators didn't encourage it. But it was the belief in racial inferiority and not sexism that most concerned her while pursuing her studies. Remembering her Oberlin days, she stated that when she rose to recite in her classes she felt as if she carried the weight of the entire African race on her shoulders, for if she failed, it would have been attributed to the fact that she was Black. Far from failing, she distinguished herself as an outstanding student at the College and became involved in all facets of campus life. However, when the freedmen began pouring into Oberlin during the Civil War years, despite her studies, Fanny established a free evening school to teach them. This experience had a profound effect upon her as she witnessed Black elderly men struggling to learn simple words after working all day. Of the experience Fanny wrote, "I rejoiced that even then I could enter measurably upon the course of life which I had long ago chosen."[110]

Another Black female of the North, Charlotte Forten, was also eager to help her race through education. Born free in 1837, Charlotte was the granddaughter of James Forten, the wealthy Philadelphia sailmaker. She grew up in material comfort in Philadelphia and spent her days as other affluent females did by reading classics, poetry, attending lectures and concerts. Despite the Fortens' wealth, as Blacks they had suffered discrimination and felt a strong sense of obligation to their less fortunate members of the Black race. The entire family was actively involved in anti-slavery and abolitionist organizations.[111]

Charlotte was taught by a private tutor while living in Philadelphia because her family refused to send her to the segregated schools of the city. As an adolescent she was sent to Salem, Massachusetts to live with the previously mentioned Black abolitionist family the Remonds where she could attend the integrated schools there. While in Salem, Charlotte submerged herself in the various abolitionist activities of the Black people in New England and became a member of the Female Anti-Slavery Society of Salem. These activities impressed upon her the role that Black women could have in race improvement. In her journal of 1854, she wrote that she would improve her intellect specifically for the purpose of doing "much towards changing the condition of my oppressed and suffering people." Deciding to become a teacher, by 1856 she had completed the normal course at Salem Normal School. Afterwards, she was appointed the first Black teacher in the Salem Public Schools where she taught two years, resigning due to poor health.[112]

The Civil War year brought Charlotte, like Fanny Jackson, her first opportunity to teach her race. When the call came for teachers to take part in the social experiment at Port Royal, South Carolin in 1861, Charlotte enthusiastically volunteered to teach the contrabands. Arriving on St. Helena Island in October in 1861, she chronicled in detail the successes of the Black pupils in her diary. While on the Island she published articles in various magazines about her experience testifying to the great

progress being made and the eagerness of the students of all ages to learn. According to her biographer, Ray Billington, when she returned North in May 1864 because of ill-health, Ms. Forten's greatest reward in leaving "was the knowledge that the social experiment was successful . . .and that Negroes were as capable of progress as whites."[113]

In the Sea Islands during the same period as Charlotte Forten was Susan King Taylor. With a background vastly different from Forten's, Taylor was born a slave in the Georgia Sea Islands and grew up in Savannah where, as noted previously, she was educated in clandestine schools of that city. When only fourteen years old, she volunteered to teach in one of the freedmen schools on St. Simon Island. While there she joined the first Black military regiment, Company E., serving as a laundress and nurse in the day and a teacher at night. Remaining on the Island for over four years, she taught most of the men in the Company to read and write. Although Taylor never received any pay for her efforts during her years on the Island, she commented that her greatest reward was to view a once illiterate slave read.[114] In her Reminiscences published in 1902, Taylor stated that she was simply happy to know that her efforts had been successful and that her services had been appreciated. She did note, however, concern that by the turn of the century little attention or credit had been given to the great sacrifices and courageous acts that Black women had made during the War. She remembered that many Black women had assisted the Union Army, even at the price of death. Of the women's activities, Taylor wrote:

> There are many people who do not know what some of the colored women did during the war. There were hundreds of them who assisted the Union soldiers by hiding them and helping them to escape. Many were punished for taking food to the prison stockades. . . . Others assisted in various ways the Union army. These things should be kept in history before the people. There has never been a greater war in the United States than the one in 1861, where so many lives were lost, not men alone but noble women as well.[115]

CONCLUSION

Bound together, as one Black woman stated, by a "common sorrow,"[116] Blacks whether free or slave were intricately linked. Viewed by society as neither humans or citizens, Black people had to work from the bottom up to demonstrate their ability to become responsible, capable, intelligent and productive citizens of the nation--if given the chance. While many Whites prior to Emancipation sought to abolish slavery, worked as agents on the Underground Railroad, and established schools for Blacks, few saw their charges as equals. Not interested in becoming merely "emancipated," Blacks also sought to be "elevated." By the 1830's, the theme of racial "uplift" and "elevation" was common within the Black community.

Despite the rise of the "cult of true womanhood" in the early decades of the nineteenth century, Black women found themselves neither revered nor provided for as other "women-belles." Instead, as the economic status of Northern Blacks deteriorated in the years prior to Emancipation, an increased responsibility was placed upon the Black female as breadwinner

as Black men lost jobs to European immigrants. In addition, Black women in the North experienced mob violence as they sought to earn a living.[117]

While women in general formed various charitable organizations prior to Emancipation, the motivation of Black women in forming such groups differed vastly from women of the larger society. Black women organized for survival and self-improvement, women of the larger society generally organized to escape the "true womenhood" syndrome. Further, unlike her White female counterpart, who was often ridiculed and criticized for her activities, the Black woman was encouraged and indeed expected to actively participate in efforts to aid her race.

In fact, Blacks who were not perceived as sufficiently "uplifting" the race were ostracized, publicly ridiculed and questioned concerning their race consciousness. For example, the Black Ohio State Anti-Slavery Society in 1860 resolved and stated clearly that:

> We look upon the colored man or woman who will not do for their own color what they will do for the Anglo Saxon as unworthy the name Anti-Slavery, and unfit for the association of respectable men and women.[118]

In 1861, Henry Highland Garnet, a Black nationalist, condemned J. McCune Smith, a prominent Black doctor, for consistently refusing to support the establishment of a reading room for Black youth in New York and in the city's Weekly Anglo-African publicly asked Smith what he was doing to "uplift" his race:

> And you anti-emigrationists, Dr. Smith, are no better in this respect than your hard-hearted white brethren. You likewise "do not employ niggers." You pass by the black tailor, mantus-maker, milliner, and shoemaker and carpenter, and employ white people who curse you to your teeth. Why your own party will not even employ a black doctor as a general thing. A few weeks ago an Irish gentleman showed me a beautiful mansion on the thriving Sixth Avenue, which to your credit belongs to you. I looked upon it, and felt proud of the success of my early friend. As I saw the stately pile, and heard the merry music of the trowel, hammer, and plane, I looked in vain to discover a dark face at work. There was not one there--no, not even a hod carrier. By the side of your property, another equally imposing structure was going up, owned by the Reverend James N. Glouscester [a Black man], and I saw there also an entire absence of the practical application of your professed principles. . . .Tell me, do you even go so far as to hire your houses to black people? There is one colored tradesman whom you patronize, that is the black "barber," for no one else will shave you.[119]

And abolitionist William Still, after being invited to join the newly formed Black Pythian Baseball Club in Philadelphia in 1869, wrote the members of the club and questioned their commitment to the race:

> Our kin in the South famishing for knowledge have claims so great and pressing that I feel bound to give of my means in this direction to the extent of my abilities, in preference to giving for frivolous amusements.
> Again, the poor are all around us in great want, whose claims I consider cannot be wholly ignored without doing violence to the spirit of Christianity and humanity. At all events it seems to accord more fully with my idea of duty to give where it will do the most good, and where the greatest needs are manifest.[120]

Thus, as children, most Blacks grew up being ingrained with a strong sense of duty and obligation to the race. Yet, the greatest force in the development of this racial concept would be through education. Education would elevate and the recipients of education would "uplift" the others of the race. By Emancipation and later Reconstruction, Black women would embark on what W. E. B. DuBois termed the "finest chapter" in the history of Black women[121] --the education of their race.

The purpose of education, as Fanny Jackson Coppin wrote Frederick Douglass in 1877, was not to produce "mere scholars" but to produce Blacks who would be committed to aiding the race.[122] Recalling that her desire to help in the "uplift" of her race came as a child, Coppin wrote, "I feel sometimes like a person to whom in childhood was entrusted some sacred flame: it has burned more dimly sometimes than at others, but it always has and always will, burn steadily and persistently, for all that it will never go out but with my life."[123] Becoming the principal of the Institute for Colored Youth in Philadelphia in 1869, Fanny Jackson Coppin instilled in the thousands of Black youth who passed through the school's door the importance of race responsibility. With the flame still burning within her, Fanny Coppin's educational and racial philosophy sums up the view that thousands of Black women carried with them in their educational activities after Emancipation:

> I need not tell you, Mr. Douglass, that this is the desire to see my race lifted out of the mire of ignorance, weakness and degradation: no longer to be the fog end of the American rabble: to sit in obscure corners in public places and devour the scraps of knowledge which his superiors fling him. I want to see him erect himself above the untoward circumstances of his life: I want to see him crowned with strength and dignity: adorned with the enduring grace of intellectual attainments and a love of manly deeds and downright honesty.[124]

NOTES

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[2] Wilson Jeremiah Moses, The Golden Age of Black Nationalism, 1850-1925 (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1978), pp. 29-31.

[3] Ibid., p. 131.

[4] Sharon Harley and Rosalyn Terborg-Penn (eds.), The Afro-American Woman: Struggles and Images (Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press, 1978), p. 26.

[5] Population of the United States in 1860 (Washington, D.C., 1864), pp. 598-604.

[6] Ira Berlin, Slaves Without Masters: The Free Negro in the Antebellum South (New York: Vintage Books, 1974); John Hope Franklin, The Free Negro in North Carolina, 1790-1860 (New York: Russell & Russell, 1969), p. 223; Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America, ed. by Phillips Bradley, 2 vols. (New York, 1945), 1:359-60.

[7] Berlin, Slaves Without Masters, p. 218; John H. Bracey, Jr., et. al (eds.), Free Blacks in America, 1800-1860 (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1971), p. 1; Litwack, North of Slavery, p. 155.

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[10] Richard C. Wade, Slavery in the Cities: The South, 1820-1860 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 24.

[11] Seth M. Scheiner, Negro Mecca: A History of the Negro in New York City, 1865-1920 (New York: New York University Press, 1965), p. 46.

[12] Lorenzo Green and Carter G. Woodson, The Negro Wage Earner (1930, reprint ed., New York, 1969), p. 213.

[13] Quoted in Irving H. Bartlett, From Slave to Citizen: The Story of the Negro in Rhode Island (Providence, Rhode Island, 1954), p. 35; Dorothy Porter (ed.), Early Negro Writings, 1760-1831 (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), pp. 5-78.

[14] Laws of the African Society, Instituted at Boston, 1796 (Boston, 1802).

[15] Berlin, Slaves Without Masters, p. 308-315.

[16] See George M. Fredrickson's The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914 (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1971); Winthrop D. Jordan's White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550-1812 (Baltimore: Penguin Books, Inc., 1969); and Louis Ruchames' Racial Thought in America: From the Puritans to Abraham Lincoln (Amherst, Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 1970).

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[18] Ibid.

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[24] Bracey, Free Blacks, p. 3; Quarles, Black Abolitionists, p. 24.

[25] Berlin, Slaves Without Masters, p. 344.

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[42] Report of the Proceedings of the Colored National Convention, p. 19.

[43] Biographical folder, Mary Ann Shadd Cary Papers, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University, Washington, D.C.

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